

To move the vessel through the water, the vessel has a diesel-electric drive system, which includes three diesel engines 15, which are mounted on sound dampeners and are directly connected to electrical generators. The electrical current created by the generator goes directly to azimuth rudder propellers, which are mounted on the stern and include an electrical motor which is outside of the vessel and is fed by the generator driven by the diesel engines. To improve maneuverability, the device includes electrically-driven transverse thrust devices 25 located in the bow of the ship or vessel 10.

In normal operation, the vessel rests with the flat cargo deck being above the water level 50. However, by adjusting the ballast, such as sea water, in side tanks 30 and bottom tanks 35, the vessel can be trimmed and also submerge the cargo deck 11 below the surface of the water, which will assume the position of the line 60 in Fig. 1. In this position, a heavy or bulky cargo can be floated onto the cargo deck, which is substantially free of obstruction. Then, the tanks, such as the bottom tanks and side tanks, are pumped dry to change the buoyancy of the vessel and to raise the cargo deck 11 above the water level 50 with the cargo disposed thereon. It is also possible to adjust the height of the deck 11 relative to a pier or quay, so that cargo can be rolled on or rolled off.--

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 12-22 and add the following new claims:

--23. (New) A semi-submersible deadweight cargo vessel, said cargo vessel having a stern and a bow with a planar cargo deck free of obstructions extending from adjacent the stern of the vessel to a forebody with a wheelhouse at the bow, said vessel having bottom and side tanks for receiving sea water, so as to present the cargo deck at a desired level to allow a roll-on and roll-off method of loading and also at a level below the surface of the water, so that cargo can be floated on and floated off of the cargo deck, said vessel having a diesel-electric drive system with at least one main engine, each main engine including a diesel engine and a generator located forward adjacent the bow of the ship, which system drives at least one azimuth rudder propeller which has an electric motor arranged outside of the vessel adjacent the stern of the ship, and electrical lines connecting the electrical motor of the azimuth rudder propeller with the diesel-electric drive system. --